U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Open Data Plan

1. Introduction and Purpose

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is an independent federal agency established by Congress in 1974 to license and regulate the civilian use of radioactive materials in a manner that protects public health and safety, promotes the common defense and security, and safeguards the environment.

The Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act), including the OPEN Government Data Act (Title II of the Evidence Act), requires federal agencies to improve how they manage, make available, and use government data. Under 44 U.S.C. § 3506, the NRC maintains this Open Data Plan as part of its strategic information resources management planning. The plan also supports implementation of 44 U.S.C. § 3511 and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-25-05, Phase 2 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Open Government Data Access and Management Guidance.

Consistent with the NRC's data strategy, this plan describes how the agency is working to make appropriate data assets easier to find, access, understand, use, and reuse. The NRC carries out these activities while protecting information from disclosure when required for security, privacy, confidentiality, proprietary information, intellectual property, and other applicable reasons.

2. Data Governance and Stewardship

The NRC uses its enterprise data governance structure to support its data strategy and open data activities. The Enterprise Digital Strategy Council (EDSC) provides executive-level oversight of enterprise data and digital priorities. The AI and Data Steering Committee (AIDSC), chaired by the Chief Data Officer, coordinates data governance activities, including data inventory and cataloging, metadata and standards, data quality and interoperability, and identification of high-value and mission-critical data.

The NRC's Data Stewards Network connects enterprise data governance with the programs and offices that manage mission and business data. Data stewards help support the inventory, metadata, quality, accessibility, and appropriate reuse of NRC data.

3. Data Inventory, Metadata, and Open Formats

The NRC maintains an operational Comprehensive Data Inventory (CDI) and continues to expand its coverage of agency data assets. The CDI helps the NRC understand what data it has, who is responsible for the data, and how the data may be discovered, accessed, used, and appropriately disclosed. Programs and offices, supported by data stewards, continue to identify data assets and improve the completeness and quality of inventory information.

The NRC has begun implementing DCAT-US 3.0, the Federal metadata standard for describing data assets in agency data inventories and catalogs. Using this common standard helps improve the consistency and interoperability of NRC data descriptions and supports the Federal Data Catalog. The NRC will continue this work as it expands and improves the CDI and its metadata.

The NRC continues to advance the use of open and machine-readable formats to make data easier to access and reuse. As part of this effort, the NRC continues to identify and pursue appropriate opportunities to use open formats, data standards, and metadata in data collection and modernization activities. The NRC will also continue to improve the machine readability and interoperability of existing data where practical, including through ongoing data inventory, metadata, and modernization efforts.

4. Data Usage and Public Engagement

The NRC analyzes usage information from the Federal Data Catalog (Data.gov) and NRC public websites to understand how people find and use agency data. Available measures may include page and dashboard views, dataset and file downloads, and session engagement metrics.

The NRC uses this information to help make decisions about data publication and how public data are presented. For example, usage information can help identify data that receive significant public interest or areas where changes to a webpage, dashboard, dataset, or other data resource could make information easier to access. The NRC will continue to monitor and refine its use of these measures to improve public access to high-value information.

The NRC engages with a broad range of external data users to better understand how they access, use, and derive value from agency data and to identify opportunities to improve data quality, usability, and access. Engagement has informed NRC work on curated datasets drawn from public ADAMS documents to make information more usable for analysis and emerging technologies, including external AI-enabled tools. The NRC will continue to use feedback from data users and other stakeholders to identify data that could benefit from improved organization, usability, or greater public access.

5. Data Quality and Improvement

The NRC works to improve the timeliness, completeness, consistency, accuracy, usefulness, and availability of its data. Data owners, data stewards, programs and offices, and enterprise data governance all have roles in maintaining and improving data quality.

As part of its ongoing data improvement efforts, the NRC considers and, where appropriate, undertakes activities to strengthen metadata and documentation, identify and address data-quality issues, standardize and validate data, and use feedback to improve data usability. These efforts are planned and carried out based on data needs and priorities and help make appropriate NRC data easier to find, understand, access, and reuse.

6. Prioritizing Public Data Asset Review

Building on its existing publication of high-value data, the NRC considers factors such as feasibility, usability, sensitivity, mission relevance, and public interest when identifying data assets for priority consideration. Public interest may be informed by data usage, feedback from data users and other stakeholders, and input from NRC programs and offices.

The NRC will continue to refine its approach for evaluating priority data assets. The public may also suggest data for priority consideration, as well as considerations that could inform prioritization, through the NRC Open Data Point of Contact identified below.

7. Open Data Goals and Plan Maintenance

The NRC will continue to advance its open data capabilities in alignment with agency data priorities and mission needs. This includes identifying and considering the technology, workforce capabilities, and acquisition practices needed to sustain and improve how the agency manages and makes appropriate data available for public use.

The NRC plans to review and update this Open Data Plan at least annually to reflect progress, changing priorities, and improvements in its open data capabilities.

The NRC Data Governance Team serves as the agency's Open Data Point of Contact. Members of the public and other data users may contact the team with questions, recommendations, data-quality or usability concerns, suggestions for improving NRC public data, or suggestions about data that should be considered for greater public access.

Open Data Point of Contact: NRC Data Governance Team

Email: DataGovernance.Resource@nrc.gov